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Humorous Poems

Edited by HANNAFORD BENNETT

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Humorous Poems

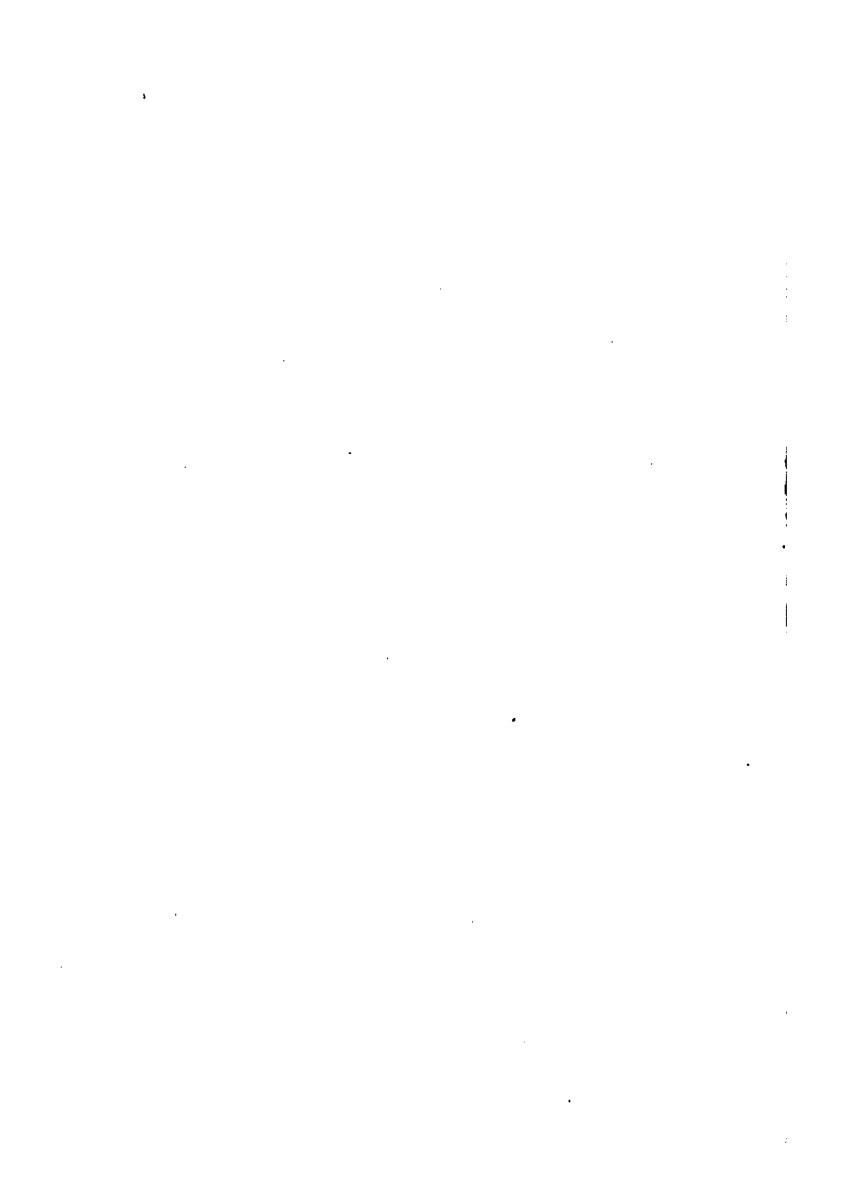
By
Thomas Hood

With Biographical Introduction
by
Hannaford Bennett



London
John Long
13 & 14 Norris Street, Haymarket

MCMVII



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Biographical Introduction

THOMAS HOOD used to say in jest that as his grandmother was a Miss Armstrong he was descended from two notorious thieves, Robin Hood and Johnnie Armstrong. "Of his birth and parentage," wrote his daughter, "we can glean but few particulars." Thomas Hood's father was a Scotsman who settled in London, and became a member of a firm of booksellers in the Poultry which published several interesting reprints, and the poetry of Bloomfield and Kirk White. Hood had a feeling for books, and himself wrote a couple of novels which are long since forgotten, but upon this foundation Thomas Hood was wont to remark that he was born with a dash of ink in his blood.

Thomas Hood was born on 23rd May 1799, in the Poultry, within the sound of Bow Bells. His education, such as it was, was received in London. So long as he

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remained at school the master, as Hood says, "made him feel it impossible not to take an interest in learning while he seemed so interested in teaching." But by the early death of his father he was obliged to leave school, and, in his fifteenth year, was apprenticed as an engraver to his uncle, Robert Sands. A year or two later a breakdown in his health compelled him to leave London, and he went to some relatives in Scotland. Hood's first published writings appeared in a Scottish newspaper, the *Dundee Advertiser*. At that time he had no idea of adopting authorship as a profession, and he tells us that the editor published his writings without charging him anything for inserting them. Returning to London, he obtained the sub-editorship of the *London Magazine*, which had changed hands upon the death of its editor, who was killed in a duel. Hood abandoned, for health's sake, the work of engraving and turned definitely to journalism, but the art that he had mastered was not lost upon him when later on he came to illustrate some of his own writings. His first essays in the *London Magazine* were of the nature of humorous answers to fictitious correspondents, and he

thus early showed his love of punning. For example: W. is informed that his "Night" is too long, for the moon rises twice in it. The "Essay on Agricultural Distress" would only increase it. B. is surely humming. H. B.'s "Sonnet to the Rising Sun" is suspected of being written for a Lark. W.'s "Tears of Sensibility" had better be dropped. The "Echo" will not answer. T., who says his Tales are out of his own head, is asked if he is a tadpole. M.'s "Ode on the Martyrs who were burnt in the reign of Queen Mary" is original but wants fire.

Hood's first regular contribution was a little poem *To Hope*, which appeared in the number for July 1821. It was followed by the facetious *Ode to Dr Kitchener* and the *Sentimental Journey from Islington to Waterloo Bridge*, and the fine serious poem *Lycus the Centaur*. Hood became acquainted with Charles Lamb, Allan Cunningham, Hazlitt, de Quincey, John Hamilton Reynolds, and other contributors to the magazine. His friendship with Reynolds had the most important effects. In 1824 he married Reynolds's sister, Jane, contrary to the wishes of her family. The marriage was perfectly happy, but Hood's position was precarious,

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and he suffered from organic disease. His means were always straitened and his life was one long record of sickness and trouble. The catalogue of his illnesses and sufferings, indeed, is painful to read, and in himself he fulfilled his own description as one of the "master - minds at journey - work — moral magistrates greatly underpaid—immortals without a living—members of the human heart, breaking their own mighty intellects without their mite."

In 1825 conjointly with Reynolds, Hood published his first book, *Odes and Addresses to Great People*. The title page bore no author's name, but a copy chanced to fall into the hands of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who assumed that such fun and poetry could have emanated from but one living man—Charles Lamb. Coleridge wrote to Lamb a letter of enthusiastic praise: "My dear Charles, it was certainly written by you. You are found in the manner as the lawyers say . . . excepting my own self, who is there but you who could write the musical lines and stanzas that are intermixed?" Lamb wrote back later that the "*Odes* are four-fifths done by Hood—a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid.

The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister Hood has lately married. I have not had a broken finger in them. . . . Hood will be gratified, as much as I am, by your mistake." And Lamb adds at the close of the letter: "Hood has just come in; his sick eyes sparkled with health when he read your appreciation." The *Odes* were followed by two series of *Whims and Oddities*, and in 1827 Hood reprinted his serious poems from the *London Magazine* under the title of *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, and dedicated them to Coleridge; but the volume fell almost flat, and the author bought up a large number of the remainder copies "to save them," as he says, "from the butter shop." About this time Hood engaged in a certain amount of theatrical work. He wrote the libretto of an opera which was performed at the Surrey Theatre, but its name has passed into oblivion, and a similar fate has befallen a play that he wrote for Matthews; he composed also a pantomime for the Adelphi Theatre. Among Hood's admirers was the Duke of Devonshire, who gave him the curious commission to supply the titles for some sham books in a library. Some of these titles were: "On Cutting off Heirs with a Shilling, by Barber

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Beaumont." "On the Affinity of the Death Watch and the Sheep Tick." "Rules for Punctuation by a Thoroughbred Pointer." "Cursory Remarks on Swearing." "Barrow on the Common Weal." "Boyle on Steam." "Pygmalion, by Lord Bacon." "Recollections of Bannister, by Lord Stair." "Lamb's Recollections of Suett." "Lamb on the Death of Wolfe."

The failure of a firm with which Hood was connected involved him in considerable pecuniary difficulties, and to avoid bankruptcy, and to effect economy, he decided to live on the Continent, determining to try whether he could not "score off his debts as effectually with his pen as with the legal whitewash." He had good reason to expect, he said, that by redoubled diligence, economising, and escaping costs at law, he would soon be able to meet his engagements. Hood lived in Germany for a few years, but the difficulty of conducting his affairs from a distance brought him back to London in the spring of 1840; and next year a gleam of sunshine fell upon him by his appointment to the editorship of the *New Monthly Magazine*, at a salary of £300 a year and special payment for contributions. In *Punch*

for Christmas, 1843, the *Song of the Shirt* appeared anonymously. Mrs Hood, in sending it to *Punch*, had said: "Now mind, Hood, mark my words, this will tell wonderfully." It was copied into the papers, and ran like wildfire through the land. Hood was astonished at its popularity and touched and pleased to hear it sung in the streets.

Hood retained the editorship of the *New Monthly Magazine* until, in 1844, he started *Hood's Magazine*, but his increasing ill-health and financial troubles weighed heavily upon him. In June 1844 Sir Robert Peel conferred upon Mrs Hood, her husband's health being so serious, a pension of £100 a year. At Christmas Hood took to his bed and never again left it. The end came after great suffering on the 3rd of May 1845. Hood is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, and a Public monument to his memory was erected which bears the words: "He sang the Song of the Shirt."

HANNAFORD BENNETT.



Hood's Humorous Poems

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN

AN OLD BALLAD

YOUNG Ben he was a nice young man,
A carpenter by trade ;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetched a walk one day,
They met a press-gang crew ;
And Sally she did faint away,
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The boatswain swore with wicked words,
Enough to shock a saint,
That though she did seem in a fit,
'Twas nothing but a feint.

16 Hood's Humorous Poems

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head,
 He'll be as good as me ;
For when your swain is in our boat,
 A boatswain he will be."

So when they'd made their game of her,
 And taken off her elf,
She roused, and found she only was
 A coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"
 She cried, and wept outright :
"Then I will to the water side,
 And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,
 "Now, young woman," said he,
"If you weep on so, you will make
 Eye-water in the sea."

"Alas ! they've taken my beau Ben
 To sail with old Benbow ;"
And her woe began to run afresh,
 As if she'd said "Gee woe !"

Says he, "They've only taken him
To the Tender ship, you see ;"
"The Tender ship," cried Sally Brown,
"What a hard-ship that must be !

Oh ! would I were a mermaid now,
For then I'd follow him ;
But oh ! I'm not a fish-woman,
And so I cannot swim.

Alas ! I was not born beneath
The Virgin and the Scales,
So I must curse my cruel stars,
And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sailed to many a place
That's underneath the world ;
But in two years the ship came home
And all her sails were furled.

But when he called on Sally Brown,
To see how she went on,
He found she'd got another Ben,
Whose Christian name was John.

18 Hood's Humorous Poems

"O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown !
How could you serve me so ?
I've met with many a breeze before,
But never such a blow."

Then reading on his 'bacco box,
He heaved a bitter sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing "All's Well,"
But could not though he tried :
His head was turned, and so he chewed
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befell :
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton toll'd the bell.

THE MERMAID OF MARGATE

“ Alas ! what perils do environ
That man who meddles with a siren ! ”

Hudibras.

ON Margate beach, where the sick one roams,
And the sentimental reads ;
Where the maiden flirts, and the widow comes
Like the ocean—to cast her weeds ;—

Where urchins wander to pick up shells,
And the Cit to spy at the ships,—
Like the water gala at Sadler’s Wells,—
And the Chandler for watery dips ;—

There’s a maiden sits by the ocean brim,
As lovely and fair as sin !
But woe, deep water and woe to him,
That she snareth like Peter Fin !

20 Hood's Humorous Poems

Her head is crowned with pretty sea-wares,
And her locks are golden and loose,
And seek to her feet, like other folks' heirs,
To stand, of course, in her shoes !

And all day long she combeth them well,
With a sea-shark's prickly jaw ;
And her mouth is just like a rose-lipped shell,
The fairest that man e'er saw !

And the Fishmonger, humble as love may be,
Hath planted his seat by her side ;
" Good even, fair maid ! Is thy lover at sea,
To make thee so watch the tide ? "

She turned about with her pearly brows,
And clasped him by the hand ;
" Come, love, with me ; I've a bonny house
On the golden Goodwin sand. "

And then she gave him a siren kiss,
No honeycomb e'er was sweeter ;
Poor wretch ! how little he dreamt for this
That Peter should be salt-Peter :

The Mermaid of Margate 21

And away with her prize to the wave she leapt,
Not walking, as damsels do,
With toe and heel, as she ought to have stept,
But she hopt like a kangaroo ;

One plunge, and then the victim was blind,
Whilst they galloped across the tide ;
At last, on the bank he waked in his mind,
And the Beauty was by his side.

One half on the sand, and half in the sea,
But his hair began to stiffen ;
For when he looked where her feet should be,
She had no more feet than Miss Biffen !

But a scaly tail, of a dolphin's growth,
In the dabbling brine did soak :
At last she opened her pearly mouth,
Like an oyster, and thus she spoke :

"You crimpt my father, who was a skate,—
And my sister you sold—a maid ;
So here remain for a fish'ry fate,
For lost you are, and betrayed !"

22 Hood's Humorous Poems

And away she went, with a sea-gull's scream,
And a splash of her saucy tail ;
In a moment he lost the silvery gleam
That shone on her splendid mail !

The sun went down with a blood-red flame,
And the sky grew cloudy and black,
And the tumbling billows like leap-frog came,
Each over the other's back !

Ah me ! it had been a beautiful scene,
With the safe terra-firma round ;
But the green water-hillocks all seem'd to him,
Like those in a churchyard ground ;

And Christians love in the turf to lie,
Not in watery graves to be ;
Nay, the very fishes will sooner die
On the land than in the sea.

And whilst he stood, the watery strife
Encroached on every hand,
And the ground decreased—his moments of life
Seemed measured, like Time's, by sand ;

The Mermaid of Margate 23


And still the waters foamed in, like ale,
In front, and on either flank,
He knew that Goodwin and Co. must fail,
There was such a run on the bank.

A little more, and a little more,
The surges came tumbling in,
He sang the evening hymn twice o'er,
And thought of every sin !

Each flounder and plaice lay cold at his heart,
As cold as his marble slab ;
And he thought he felt, in every part,
The pincers of scalded crab.

The squealing lobsters that he had boiled,
And the little potted shrimps,
All the horny prawns he had ever spoiled,
Gnawed into his soul, like imps !

And the billows were wandering to and fro,
And the glorious sun was sunk,
And Day, getting black in the face, as though
Of the night-shade she had drunk !



24 Hood's Humorous Poems

Had there been but a smuggler's cargo adrift,
One tub, or keg, to be seen,
It might have given his spirits a lift
Or an *anker* where *Hope* might lean !

But there was not a box or a beam afloat,
To raft him from that sad place ;
Not a skiff, not a yawl, or a mackerel boat,
Nor a smack upon Neptune's face.

At last, his lingering hopes to buoy,
He saw a sail and a mast,
And called " Ahoy ! "—but it was not a hoy,
And so the vessel went past.

And with saucy wing that flapped in his face,
The wild bird about him flew,
With a shrilly scream, that twitted his case,
" Why, thou art a sea-gull too ! "

And lo ! the tide was over his feet ;
Oh ! his heart began to freeze,
And slowly to pulse :—in another beat
The wave was up to his knees !

The Mermaid of Margate 25

He was deafened amidst the mountain tops,
And the salt spray blinded his eyes,
And washed away the other salt drops
That grief had caused to arise :—

But just as his body was all afloat,
And the surges above him broke,
He was saved from the hungry deep by a boat
Of Deal—(but builded of oak).

The skipper gave him a dram, as he lay,
And chafed his shivering skin ;
And the Angel returned that was flying away
With the spirit of Peter Fin.

A FAIRY TALE


ON HOUNSLOW HEATH—and close beside the road,
As western travellers may oft have seen,—
A little house some years ago there stood,
 A minikin abode ;
And built like Mr Birkbeck's, all of wood :
The walls of white, the window-shutters green,—
Four wheels it had at North, South, East, and West
 (Though now at rest),
On which it used to wander to and fro,
Because its master ne'er maintained a rider,
 Like those who trade in Paternoster Row ;
But made his business travel for itself,
 Till he had made his pelf,
And then retired—if one may call it so,
 Of a roadsider.

Perchance, the very race and constant riot
Of stages, long and short, which thereby ran,
Made him more relish the repose and quiet,
 Of his now sedentary caravan ;
Perchance, he loved the ground because 'twas
 common,

 And so he might impale a strip of soil
 That furnished, by his toil,
Some dusty greens, for him and his old woman ;—
And five tall hollyhocks, in dingy flower :
Howbeit, the thoroughfare did no ways spoil
His peace, unless, in some unlucky hour,
A stray horse came, and gobbled up his bow'r.

But tired of always looking at the coaches,
The same to come,—when they had seen them
 one day !

 And, used to brisker life, both man and wife
Began to suffer N U E's approaches,
And feel retirement like a long wet Sunday,—
So, having had some quarters of school breeding,
They turned themselves, like other folks, to
 reading ;



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But setting out where others nigh have done,
And being ripened in the seventh stage,
The childhood of old age,
Began, as other children have begun,—
Not with the pastorals of Mr. Pope,
Or Bard of Hope,
Or Paley ethical, or learned Porson,
But spelt, on Sabbaths, in St. Mark, or John,
And then relax'd themselves with Whittington,
Or Valentine and Orson—
But chiefly fairy tales they loved to con,
And being easily melted in their dotage,
Slobber'd,—and kept
Reading,—and wept
Over the White Cat, in their wooden cottage,
Thus reading on—the longer
They read, of course, their childish faith grew
stronger
In Gnomes, and Hags, and Elves, and Giants
grim,—
If talking Trees and Birds revealed to him,
She saw the flight of Fairyland's fly-waggons,
And magic fishes swim

In puddle ponds, and took old crows for dragons,—
Both were quite drunk from the enchanted flagons ;
When as it fell upon a summer's day,

As the old man sat a feeding
On the old-babe reading,
Beside his open street-and-parlour door,
A hideous roar
Proclaimed a drove of beasts was coming by the
way.

Long-horned, and short, of many a different breed,
Tall, tawny brutes, from famous Lincoln-levels
Or Durham feed,
With some of those unquiet black dwarf devils
From nether side of Tweed,
Or Firth of Forth ;

Looking half wild with joy to leave the North,—
With dusty hides, all mobbing on together,—
When,—whether from a fly's malicious comment
Upon his tender flank, from which he shrank ;
Or whether
Only in some enthusiastic moment,—

30 Hood's Humorous Poems

However, one brown monster, in a frisk,
Giving his tail a perpendicular whisk,
Kicked out a passage through the beastly rabble ;
And after a pas seul,—or, if you will, a
Horn-pipe before the basket-maker's villa,
 Leapt o'er the tiny pale,—
Backed his beefsteaks against the wooden gable,
And thrust his brawny bell-rope of a tail
 Right o'er the page,
 Wherein the sage
Just then was spelling some romantic fable.

The old man, half a scholar, half a dunce,
Could not peruse,—who could ?—two tales at once ;
 And being huffed
At what he knew was none of Riquet's Tuft,
 Banged-to the door,
But most unluckily enclosed a morsel
Of the intruding tail, and all the tassel :
 The monster gave a roar,
And bolting off with speed increased by pain,
The little house became a coach once more,
And, like Macheath, "took to the road " again !

Just then, by fortune's whimsical decree,
The ancient woman stooping with her crupper
Towards sweet home, or where sweet home should
be,

Was getting up some household herbs for supper ;
Thoughtful of Cinderella, in the tale,
And, quaintly wondering if magic shifts
Could o'er a common pumpkin so prevail,
To turn it to a coach ;—what pretty gifts
Might come of cabbages, and curly kale ;
Meanwhile she never heard her old man's wail,
Nor turned, till home had turned a corner, quite
Gone out of sight !

At last, conceive her, rising from the ground,
Weary of sitting on her russet clothing,
And looking round
Where rest was to be found,
There was no house—no villa there—no nothing !
No house !

The change was quite amazing ;
It made her senses stagger for a minute,
The riddle's explanation seemed to harden ;

32 Hood's Humorous Poems

But soon her superannuated *nous*
Explain'd the horrid mystery ;—and raising
Her hand to heaven, with the cabbage in it,
On which she meant to sup,—
“ Well ! this *is* Fairy Work ! I'll bet a farden,
Little Prince Silverwings has ketch'd me up,
And set me down in some one else's garden ! ”

EQUESTRIAN COURTSHIP

It was a young maiden went forth to ride,
And there was a wooer to pace by her side ;
His horse was so little, and hers so high,
He thought his angel was up in the sky.

His love was great, though his wit was small ;
He bade her ride easy—and that was all.
The very horses began to neigh,—
Because their betters had nought to say.

They rode by elm, and they rode by oak,
They rode by a churchyard, and then he spoke :
“ My pretty maiden, if you’ll agree,
You shall always amble through life with me.”

The damsel answered him never a word,
But kicked the grey mare, and away she spurred.

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The wooer still followed behind the jade,
And enjoyed—like a wooer—the dust she made.

They rode thro' moss and they rode thro' moor,—
The gallant behind and the lass before :—
At last they came to a miry place,
And there the sad wooer gave up the chase.

Quoth he, " If my nag was better to ride,
I'd follow her over the world so wide.
Oh, it is not my love that begins to fail,
But I've lost the last glimpse of the grey mare's
tail ! "

TIM TURPIN

A PATHETIC BALLAD

I.

TIM TURPIN he was gravel blind,
And ne'er had seen the skies ;
For Nature when his head was made,
Forgot to dot his eyes.

II.

So, like a Christmas pedagogue,
Poor Tim was forced to do—
Look out for pupils ; for he had
A vacancy for two.

III.

There's some have specs to help their sight
Of objects dim and small :
But Tim had *specks* within his eyes,
And could not see at all.

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IV.

Now Tim he wooed a servant maid,
And took her to his arms ;
For he, like Pyramus, had cast
A wall-eye on her charms.

V.

By day she led him up and down,
Where'er he wished to jog,
A happy wife, altho' she led
The life of any dog.

VI.

But just when Tim had lived a month
In honey with his wife,
A surgeon op'd his Milton eyes,
Like oysters, with a knife.

VII.

But when his eyes were opened thus,
He wished them dark again :
For when he look'd upon his wife,
He saw her very plain.

VIII.

Her face was bad, her figure worse,
He couldn't bear to eat :
For she was anything but like
A grace before his meat.

IX.

Now Tim he was a feeling man ;
For when his sight was thick
It made him feel for everything—
But that was with a stick.

X.

So, with a cudgel in his hand—
It was not light or slim—
He knocked at his wife's head until
It opened unto him.

XI.

And when the corpse was stiff and cold,
He took his slaughtered spouse,
And laid her in a heap with all
The ashes of her house.

XII.

But like a wicked murderer,
 He lived in constant fear
 From day to day, and so he cut
 His throat from ear to ear.

XIII.

The neighbours fetched a doctor in ;
 Said he, " This wound I dread
 Can hardly be sewed up—his life
 Is hanging on a thread."

XIV.

But when another week was gone,
 He gave him stronger hope—
 Instead of hanging on a thread,
 Of hanging on a rope.

XV.

Ah ! when he hid his bloody work
 In ashes round about,
 How little he supposed the truth
 Would soon be sifted out.

XVI.

But when the parish dustman came,
His rubbish to withdraw,
He found more dust within the heap
Than he contracted for !

XVII.

A dozen men to try the fact
Were sworn that very day ;
But though they all were jurors, yet
No conjurors were they.

XVIII.

Said Tim unto those jurymen,
" You need not waste your breath,
For I confess myself at once
The author of her death.

XIX.

And, oh ! when I reflect upon
The blood that I have spilt,
Just like a button is my soul,
Inscribed with double *guilt* ! "

XX.

Then turning round his head again,
He saw before his eyes,
A great judge, and a little judge,
The judges of a-size !

XXI.

The great judge took his judgment cap,
And put it on his head,
And sentenced Tim by law to hang
Till he was three times dead.

XXII.

So he was tried, and he was hung
(Fit punishment for such)
On Horsham-drop, and none can say
It was a drop too much.

DEATH'S RAMBLE

ONE day the dreary old King of Death
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,
And quietly stole from his charnel.

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,
His body was lean and lank,
His joints at each stir made a crack, and the cur
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,
This goblin of grisly bone?
He dabbled and spilled man's blood, and he killed
Like a butcher that kills his own.

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The first he slaughtered it made him laugh
 (For the man was a coffin-maker),
To think how the mutes, and men in black suits,
 Would mourn for an undertaker.

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church,
 Quoth he, "We shall not differ."
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,
 For he could not make them stiffer.

He saw two duellists going to fight,
 In fear they could not smother ;
And he shot one through at once—for he knew
 They never would shoot each other.

He saw a watchman fast in his box,
 And he gave a snore infernal ;
Said Death, "He may keep his breath, for his
 sleep
 Can never be more eternal."

He met a coachman driving his coach,
 So slow, that his fare grew sick ;
But he let him stray on his tedious way,
 For Death only wars on the *quick*.


Death saw a toll-man taking a toll,
In the spirit of his fraternity ;
But he knew that sort of man would extort,
Though summoned to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,
But he let him write no further ;
For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,
Is jealous of all self-murder !

Death saw a patient that pulled out his purse,
And a doctor that took the sum ;
But he let them be—for he knew that the “ fee ”
Was a prelude to “ faw ” and “ fum.”

He met a dustman ringing a bell,
And he gave him a mortal thrust ;
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,
And he marked him out for slaughter ;
For on water he scarcely had cared for Death
And never on rum-and-water.



44 Hood's Humorous Poems

Death saw two players playing at cards,
But the game wasn't worth a dump,
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade,
To wait for the final trump !

A PARTHIAN GLANCE

"Sweet Memory, wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the stream of time I turn my sail."

ROGERS.

I.

COME, my Crony, let's think upon far-away days,
And lift up a little Oblivion's veil;
Let's consider the past with a lingering gaze,
Like a peacock whose eyes are inclined to his
tail.

II.

Ay, come, let us turn our attention behind,
Like those critics whose heads are so heavy, I
fear,
That they cannot keep up with the march of the
mind,
And so turn face about for reviewing the rear.

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III.

Looking over Time's crupper and over his tail,
Oh ! what ages and pages there are to revise !
And as farther our back-searching glances prevail,
Like the emmets, "how little we are in our
eyes !"

IV.

What a sweet pretty innocent, half a yard long,
On a dimity lap of true nursery make !
I can fancy I hear the old lullaby song
That was meant to compose me, but kept me
awake.

V.

Methinks I still suffer the infantine throes,
When my flesh was a cushion for any long pin—
Whilst they patted my body to comfort my woes,
Oh ! how little they dreamt they were driving
them in !

VI.

Infant sorrows are strong—infant pleasures as
weak—
But no grief was allowed to indulge in its note ;

Did you ever attempt a small "bubble and squeak,"

Thro' the Dalby's Carminative down in your throat?

VII.

Did you ever go up to the roof with a bounce?

Did you ever come down to the floor with the same?

Oh! I can't but agree with both ends, and pronounce

"Head or tails" with a child, an unpleasantish game!

VIII.

Then an urchin—I see myself urchin, indeed,

With a smooth Sunday face for a mother's delight;

Why should weeks have an end?—I am sure there was need

Of a Sabbath to follow each Saturday night.

48 Hood's Humorous Poems

IX.

Was your face ever sent to the housemaid to
scrub?

Have you ever felt huckaback softened with
sand?

Had you ever your nose towelled up to a snub,
And your eyes knuckled out with the back of
the hand?

X.

Then a schoolboy—my tailor was nothing in fault
For an urchin will grow to a lad by degrees,—
But how well I remember that “pepper and salt”
That was down to the elbows, and up to the
knees!

XI.

What a figure it cut when as Norval I spoke!
With a lanky right leg duly planted before;
Whilst I told of the chief that was killed by my
stroke,
And extended *my* arms as “the arms that he
wore!”

XII.

Next a Lover—Oh ! say, were you ever in love ?

With a lady too cold—and your bosom too hot !
Have you bowed to a shoe-tie, and knelt to a
glove,

Like a *beau* that desired to be tied in a knot ?

XIII.

With the bride all in white, and your body in blue,
Did you walk up the aisle—the genteelest of
men ?

When I think of that beautiful vision anew,

Oh ! I seem but the *biffin* of what I was then !

XIV.

I am withered and worn by a premature care,

And my wrinkles confess the decline of my
days ;

Old Time's busy hand has made free with my hair,

And I'm seeking to hide it—by writing for bays.

A SAILOR'S APOLOGY FOR BOW- LEGS

THERE'S some is born with their legs straight by
natur—

And some is born with bow-legs from the first—
And some that should have growed a good deal
straighter,

But they were badly nursed,
And set, you see, like Bacchus, with their pegs
Astride of casks and kegs.

I've got myself a sort of bow to larboard,
And starboard,

And this is what it was that warped my legs :
'Twas all along of Poll, as I may say,
That foul'd my cable when I ought to slip ;
But on the tenth of May,
When I gets under weigh,

A Sailor's Apology

51

Down there in Hartfordshire, to join my ship,

I sees the mail

Get under sail,

The only one there was to make the trip.

Well, I gives chase,

But as she run

Two knots to one,

There warn't no use in keeping on the race !

Well, casting round about, what next to
try on,

And how to spin,

I spies an ensign with a Bloody Lion,

And bears away to leeward for the inn,

Beats round the gable,

And fetches up before the coach horse stable.

Well, there they stand, four kickers in a row,

And so

I just makes free to cut a brown 'un's cable.

But riding isn't in a seaman's natur ;

So I whips out a toughish end of yarn,

And gets a kind of sort of a land-waiter

52 Hood's Humorous Poems

To splice me, heel to heel,
Under the she-mare's keel,
And off I goes, and leaves the inn a-starn !

My eyes ! how she did pitch !
And wouldn't keep her own to go in no line,
Tho' I kept bowsing, bowsing at her bow-line,
But always making lee-way to the ditch,
And yawed her head about all sorts of ways.

The devil sink the craft !
And wasn't she tremendous slack in stays !
We couldn't, no how, keep the inn abaft !

Well, I suppose
We hadn't run a knot—or much beyond—
(What will you have on it?)—but off she goes,
Up to her bends in a fresh-water pond !

There I am ! all a-back !
So I looks forward for her bridle gears,
To heave her head round on the t'other tack ;
But when I starts,
The leather parts,
And goes away right over by the ears !

What could a fellow do,
Whose legs, like mine, you know, were in the
 bilboes,
But trim myself upright for bringing-to,
And square his yard-arms and brace up his elbows,
 In rig all snug and clever,
Just while his craft was taking in her water?
I didn't like my berth, though, howsomdever,
Because the yarn, you see, kept getting tauter.
Says I—I wish this job was rayther shorter!

The chase had gained a mile
Ahead, and still the she-mare stood a-drinking;
 Now, all the while
Her body didn't take, of course, to shrinking.
Says I, she's letting out her reefs, I'm thinking;
 And so she swelled and swelled,
 And yet the tackle held,
Till both my legs began to bend like winkin.
My eyes! but she took in enough to founder!
And there's my timbers straining every bit,
 Ready to split,
And her tarnation hull a-growing rounder!

54 Hood's Humorous Poems

Well, there—off Hartford Ness
We lay both lashed and water-logged together,
And can't contrive a signal of distress.
Thinks I, we must ride out this here foul weather,
Tho' sick of riding out, and nothing less ;
When, looking round, I sees a man a-starn :
“ Hollo ! ” says I, “ come underneath her quarter ! ”
And hands him out my knife to cut the yarn.
So I gets off, and lands upon the road,
And leaves the she-mare to her own consarn,
A-standing by the water.
If I get on another, I'll be blowed !
And that's the way, you see, my legs got bowed !

JOHN TROT

A BALLAD

I.

JOHN TROT he was as tall a lad
As York did ever rear—
As his dear Granny used to say,
He'd make a grenadier.

II.

A sergeant soon came down to York,
With ribbons and a frill ;
“ My lads,” said he, “ let broadcast be,
And come away to drill.”

III.

But when he wanted John to 'list,
In war he saw no fun,
Where what is called a raw recruit
Gets often over-done.

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IV.

"Let others carry guns," said he,
"And go to war's alarms,
But I have got a shoulder-knot
Imposed upon my arms."

V.

For John he had a footman's place
To wait on Lady Wye—
She was a dumpy woman, tho'
Her family was high.

VI.

Now when two years had passed away,
Her lord took very ill,
And left her to her widowhood,
Of course more dumpy still.

VII.

Said John, "I am a proper man,
And very tall to see ;
Who knows, but now her lord is low,
She may look up to me ?"

VIII.

A cunning woman told me once,
Such fortune would turn up ;
She was a kind of sorceress,
But studied in a cup !

IX.

So he walked up to Lady Wye,
And took her quite amazed,—
She thought, tho' John was tall enough,
He wanted to be raised.

X.

But John—for why? she was a dame
Of such a dwarfish sort—
Had only come to bid her make
Her mourning very short.

XI.

Said he, "Your lord is dead and cold,
You only cry in vain ;
Not all the cries of London now
Could call him back again !

XII.

You'll soon have many a noble beau,
 To dry your noble tears—
 But just consider this, that I
 Have followed you for years.

XIII.

And tho' you are above me far,
 What matters high degree,
 When you are only four foot nine,
 And I am six foot three !

XIV.

For tho' you are of lofty race,
 And I'm a low-born elf ;
 Yet none among your friends could say,
 You matched beneath yourself."

XV.

Said she, "Such insolence as this
 Can be no common case ;
 Tho' you are in my service, sir,
 Your love is out of place."

XVI.

"O Lady Wye! O Lady Wye!
Consider what you do;
How can you be so short with me,
I am not so with you!"

XVII.

Then ringing for her serving-men,
They showed him to the door:
Said they, "You turn out better now,
Why didn't you before?"

XVIII.

They stripped his coat, and gave him kicks
For all his wages due;
And off, instead of green and gold,
He went in black and blue.

XIX.

No family would take him in,
Because of his discharge;
So he made up his mind to serve
The country all at large.

60 Hood's Humorous Poems

xx.

"Huzza!" the sergeant cried, and put
The money in his hand,
And with a shilling cut him off
From his paternal land.

xxi.

For when his regiment went to fight
At Saragossa town,
A Frenchman thought he looked too tall,
And so he cut him down!

MARY'S GHOST

A PATHETIC BALLAD

I.

'Twas in the middle of the night,
To sleep young William tried
When Mary's ghost came stealing in,
And stood at his bed-side.

II.

O William dear ! O William dear
My rest eternal ceases ;
Alas ! my everlasting peace
Is broken into pieces.

III.

I thought the last of all my cares
Would end with my last minute ;
But though I went to my long home,
I didn't stay long in it.

62 Hood's Humorous Poems

IV.

The body-snatchers they have come,
And made a snatch at me ;
It's very hard them kind of men
Won't let a body be !

V.

You thought that I was buried deep,
Quite decent like and chary,
But from her grave in Mary-bone,
They've come and boned your Mary.

VI.

The arm that used to take your arm
Is took to Dr Vyse ;
And both my legs are gone to walk
The hospital at Guy's.

VII.

I vowed that you should have my hand,
But fate gives us denial ;
You'll find it there, at Dr Bell's,
In spirits and a phial.

VIII.

As for my feet, the little feet
You used to call so pretty,
There's one, I know, in Bedford Row,
The t'other's in the City.

IX.

I can't tell where my head is gone,
But Doctor Carpue can ;
As for my trunk it's all packed up
To go by Pickford's van.

X.

I wish you'd go Mr. P.
And save me such a ride ;
I don't half like the outside place,
They've took for my inside.

XI.

The cock it crows—I must be gone !
My William, we must part !
But I'll be yours in death, altho'
Sir Astley has my heart.

64 Hood's Humorous Poems

XII.

Don't go to weep upon my grave,
And think that there I be ;
They haven't left an atom there
Of my anatomie.

THE CARELESSE NURSE MAYD

I SAWE a Mayd sitte on a Bank,
Beguiled by Wooer fayne and fond;
And whiles His flatteryng Vowes She drank,
Her Nurselynge slipt within a Pond !

All Even Tide they Talkde and Kist,
For She was Fayre and He was Kinde ;
The Sunne went down before She wist
Another Sonne had set behinde !

With angrie Hands and frownyng Browe,
That deemd Her owne the Urchine's Sinne,
She pluckt Him out, but he was now
Past being Whipt for fallynge in.

She then beginnes to wayle the Ladde
With Shrikes that Echo answered round—
O foolishe Mayd ! to be soe sadde
The Momente that her Care was drown'd !

A REPORT FROM BELOW

“Blow high, blow low.”—*Sea Song.*

As Mister B. and Mistress B.
One night were sitting down to tea,
With toast and muffins hot—
They heard a loud and sudden bounce,
That made the very china flounce ;
They could not for a time pronounce
If they were safe or shot—
For Memory brought a deed to match
At Deptford done by night—
Before one eye appeared a Patch
In t’other eye a Blight !

To be belaboured out of life
Without some small attempt at strife,
Our nature will not grovel ;
One impulse moved both man and dame,

He seized the tongs—she did the same,
Leaving the ruffian, if he came,
The poker and the shovel.
Suppose the couple standing so,
When rushing footsteps from below
Made pulses fast and fervent,
And first burst in the frantic cat,
All steaming like a brewer's vat,
And then—as white as my cravat—
Poor Mary May, the servant !
Lord, how the couple's teeth did chatter,
Master and Mistress both flew at her,
“Speak ! Fire ? or Murder ? What's the matter ?”
Till Mary getting breath,
Upon her tale began to touch
With rapid tongue, full trotting, such
As if she thought she had too much
To tell before her death :—

“We was both, ma'am, in the wash-house, ma'am,
a-standing at our tubs,
And Mrs Round was seconding what little things
I rubs ;

68 Hood's Humorous Poems

'Mary,' says she to me, 'I say'—and there she
stops for coughin',

'That dratted copper flue has took to smoking
very often,

But please the pigs,'—for that's her way of swear-
ing in a passion,

'I'll blow it up, and not be set a-coughin' in this
fashion !'

Well, down she takes my master's horn—I mean
his horn for loading,

And empties every grain alive for to set the flue
exploding.

'Lawk, Mrs Round !' says I, and stares, 'that
quantum is unproper,

I'm sartin sure it can't not take a pound to sky a
copper ;

You'll powder both our heads off, so I tells you,
with its puff,'

But she only dried her fingers, and she takes a
pinch of snuff.

Well, when the pinch is over—'Teach your
grandmother to suck

A powder-horn,' says she—'Well,' says I, 'I wish
you luck.'

Them words sets up her back, so with her hand
upon her hips,

‘Come,’ says she, quite in a huff, ‘come; keep
your tongue inside your lips ;

Afore ever you was born, I was well used to
things like these ;

I shall put it in the grate, and let it turn up by
degrees.’

So in it goes, and bounce—O Lord ! it gives us
such a rattle,

I thought we both were canonised, like sogers in
a battle !

Up goes the copper like a squib, and us on both
our backs,

And bless the tubs, they bundled off, and split all
into cracks.

Well, there I fainted dead away, and might have
been cut shorter,

But Providence was kind, and brought me to
with scalding water.

I first looks round for Mrs Round, and sees her
at a distance,

As stiff as starch, and looked as dead as anything
in existence ;

70 Hood's Humorous Poems

All scorched and grimed, and more than that, I
 sees the copper slap

Right on her head, for all the world like a per-
 cussion copper cap.

Well, I crooks her little fingers, and crumps them
 well up together,

As humanity pints out, and burnt her nostrums
 with a feather :

But for all as I can do, to restore her to her
 mortality,

She never gives a sign of a return to sensuality.

Thinks I, well there she lies, as dead as my own
 late departed mother,

Well, she'll wash no more in this world, whatever
 she does in t'other.

So I gives myself to scramble up the linens for a
 minute,

Lawk, sich a shirt ! thinks I, it's well my master
 wasn't in it ;

Oh ! I never, never, never, never, never, see a
 sight so shockin' ;

Here lays a leg, and there a leg—I mean, you
 know, a stockin'—

Bodies all slit and torn to rags, and many a
tattered skirt,
And arms burnt off, and sides and backs all
scotched and black with dirt ;
But as nobody was in 'em—none but—nobody
was hurt !
Well, there I am, a-scrambling up the things, all
in a lump,
When, mercy on us ! such a groan as makes my
heart to jump.
And there she is, a-lying with a crazy sort of eye,
A-staring at the wash-house roof, laid open to the
sky ;
Then she beckons with a finger, and so down to
her I reaches,
And puts my ear agin her mouth to hear her
dying speeches,
For, poor soul ! she has a husband and young
orphans, as I knew ;
Well, Ma'am, you won't believe it, but it's Gospel
fact and true,
But these words is all she whispered—' Why,
where *is* the powder blew ? ' "

THE DUEL

A SERIOUS BALLAD

“ Like the two Kings of Brentford smelling at one nosegay.”

IN Brentford town, of old renown,
There lived a Mister Bray,
Who fell in love with Lucy Bell,
And so did Mister Clay.

To see her ride from Hammersmith,
By all it was allowed,
Such fair outsides are seldom seen,
Such Angels on a Cloud.

Said Mr Bray to Mr Clay,
“ You choose to rival me,
And court Miss Bell, but there your court
No thoroughfare shall be.

Unless you now give up your suit,
You may repent your love ;
I who have shot a pigeon match
Can shoot a turtle dove.

So pray before you woo her more,
Consider what you do ;
If you pop aught to Lucy Bell—
I'll pop it into you."

Said Mr Clay to Mr Bray,
"Your threats I quite explode ;
One who has been a volunteer
Knows how to prime and load.

And so I say to you unless
Your passion quiet keeps,
I who have shot and hit bulls' eyes,
May chance to hit a sheep's."

Now gold is oft for silver changed,
And that for copper red ;
But these two went away to give
Each other change for lead.

74 Hood's Humorous Poems

But first they sought a friend apiece,
This pleasant thought to give—
When they were dead, they thus should have
Two seconds still to live.

To measure out the ground not long
The seconds then forbore,
And having taken one rash step,
They took a dozen more.

They next prepared each pistol-pan
Against the deadly strife,
By putting in the prime of death
Against the prime of life.

Now all was ready for the foes,
But when they took their stands,
Fear made them tremble so, they found
They both were shaking hands.

Said Mr C. to Mr B. :
" Here one of us may fall,
And like St Paul's Cathedral now
Be doomed to have a ball.

I do confess I did attach
Misconduct to your name ;
If I withdraw the charge, will then
Your ramrod do the same ? ”

Said Mr B. : “ I do agree—
But think of Honour’s Courts !
If we go off without a shot,
There will be strange reports.

But look, the morning now is bright,
Though cloudy it begun :
Why can’t we aim above, as if
We had called out the sun ? ”

So up into the harmless air
Their bullets they did send ;
And may all other duels have
That upshot in the end !

THE SUPPER SUPERSTITION

A PATHETIC BALLAD

“Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!”—SHAKSPEARE.

I.

'Twas twelve o'clock by Chelsea chimes,
When all in hungry trim,
Good Mister Jupp sat down to sup
With wife, and Kate, and Jim.

II.

Said he, “Upon this dainty cod
How bravely I shall sup”—
When, whiter than the tablecloth,
A GHOST came rising up !

III.

“O father dear, O mother dear,
Dear Kate, and brother Jim—
You know when some one went to sea—
Don't cry—but I am him !

The Supper Superstition 77

IV.

You hope some day with fond embrace
To greet your absent Jack,
But oh, I am come here to say
I'm never coming back !

V.

From Alexandria we set sail,
With corn, and oil, and figs,
But steering 'too much Sow,' we struck
Upon the Sow and Pigs !

VI.

The ship we pumped till we could see
Old England from the tops ;
When down she went with all our hands,
Right in the Channel's Chops.

VII.

Just give a look in Norey's chart,
The very place it tells ;
I think it says twelve fathoms deep,
Clay bottom, mixed with shells.

VIII.

Well, there we are till 'hands aloft,'
 We have at last a call ;
 The pug I had for brother Jim,
 Kate's parrot too, and all.

IX.

But oh, my spirit cannot rest
 In Davy Jones's sod,
 Till I've appeared to you and said—
 Don't sup on that 'ere Cod !

X.

You live on land, and little think
 What passes in the sea ;
 Last Sunday week, at 2 P.M.,
 That Cod was picking me !

XI.

Those oysters, too, that look so plump,
 And seem so nicely done,
 They put my corpse in many shells,
 Instead of only one.

The Supper Superstition 79

XII.

Oh, do not eat those oysters then,
And do not touch the shrimps ;
When I was in my briny grave,
They sucked my blood like imps !

XIII.

Don't eat what brutes would never eat,
The brutes I used to pat,
They'll know the smell they used to smell,
Just try the dog and cat ! ”

XIV.

The spirit fled—they wept his fate,
And cried, “ Alack, alack ! ”
At last up started brother Jim,
“ Let's try if Jack was Jack ! ”

XV.

They called the dog, they called the cat,
And little kitten too,
And down they put the Cod and sauce,
To see what brutes would do.

XVI.

Old Tray licked all the oysters up,
Puss never stood at crimps,
But munched the Cod—and little kit
Quite feasted on the shrimps !

XVII.

The thing was odd, and minus Cod
And sauce, they stood like posts ;
Oh, prudent folks, for fear of hoax,
Put no belief in Ghosts !

FAITHLESS NELLIE GRAY

A PATHETIC BALLAD

BEN BATTLE was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms ;
But a cannon ball took off his legs
So he laid down his arms !

Now as they bore him off the field,
Said he, " Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot ! "

The army-surgeons made him limbs :
Said he,—“ They're only pegs :
But there's as wooden members quite
As represent my legs ! ”

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray ;
So he went to pay her his devours
When he'd devoured his pay !

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But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff ;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off !

“O Nelly Gray ! O Nelly Gray !
Is this your love so warm ?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform !”

She said, “I loved a soldier once,
For he was blithe and brave ;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave !

Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow,
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now !”

“O Nelly Gray ! O Nelly Gray !
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call I left my legs
In Badajos's *breaches* !

“Why then,” said she, “you’ve lost the feet
Of legs in war’s alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms !”

“Oh, false and fickle Nelly Gray,
I know why you refuse :—
Though I’ve no feet—some other man
Is standing in my shoes !

I wish I ne’er had seen your face ;
But now a long farewell !
For you will be my death ;—alas !
You will not be my *Nell* !”

Now when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got—
And life was such a burthen grown,
It made him take a knot !

So round his melancholy neck
A rope he did entwine,
And, for his second time in life,
Enlisted in the Line !

84 Hood's Humorous Poems

One end he tied around a beam
And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off,—of course
He soon was off his legs !

And there he hung till he was dead
As any nail in town,—
For though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down !

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
To find out why he died—
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside !

OUR VILLAGE

BY A VILLAGER

OUR village, that's to say, not Miss Mitford's
village, but our village of Bullock's Smithy,
Is come into by an avenue of trees, three oak
pollards, two elders, and a withy ;
And in the middle there's a green, of about not
exceeding an acre and a half ;
It's common to all and fed off by nineteen cows,
six ponies, three horses, five asses, two foals,
seven pigs, and a calf !
Besides a pond in the middle, as is held by a sort
of common law lease,
And contains twenty ducks, six drakes, three
ganders, two dead dogs, four drowned kittens,
and twelve geese.

86 Hood's Humorous Poems

Of course the green's cropt very close, and does
famous for bowling when the little village
boys play at cricket;

Only some horse, or pig, or cow, or great jackass,
is sure to come and stand right before the
wicket.

There's fifty-five private houses, let alone barns
and workshops, and pigsties, and poultry
huts, and such-like sheds,


With plenty of public-houses—two Foxes, one
Green Man, three Bunch of Grapes, one
Crown, and six King's Heads.

The Green Man is reckoned the best, as the
only one that for love or money can
raise

A postilion, a blue jacket, two deplorable lame
white horses, and a ramshackle "neat post-
chaise!"

There's one parish church for all the people,
whatsoever may be their ranks in life or their
degrees,

Except one very damp, small, dark, freezing cold,
little Methodist Chapel of Ease ;



And close by the churchyard, there's a stone-
mason's yard, that when the time is season-
able

Will furnish with afflictions sore and marble urns
and cherubims, very low and reasonable.

There's a cage comfortable enough ; I've been in
it with Old Jack Jeffery and Tom Pike ;

For the Green Man next door will send you in
ale, gin, or anything else you like.

I can't speak of the stocks, as nothing remains of
them but the upright post ;

But the pound is kept in repairs for the sake of
Cob's horse as is always there almost.

There's a smithy of course, where that queer sort
of a chap in his way, Old Joe Bradley,

Perpetually hammers and stammers, for he stutters
and shoes horses very badly.

There's a shop of all sorts that sells every-
thing, kept by the widow of Mr Task ;

But when you go there it's ten to one she's out
of everything you ask.

You'll know her house by the swarm of boys, like
flies, about the old sugary cask :

88 Hood's Humorous Poems

There are six empty houses and not so well
papered inside as out,

For bill-stickers won't beware, but stick
notices of sales and election placards
about.

That's the Doctor's with a green door, where the
garden pots in the window is seen ;

A weakly monthly rose that don't blow, and a
dead geranium, and a teaplant with five
black leaves, and one green.

As for hollyhocks at the cottage doors, and honey-
suckles and jasmines, you may go and
whistle ;

But the Tailor's front garden grows two cabbages,
a dock, a ha'porth of pennyroyal, two
dandelions, and a thistle !

There are three small orchards—Mr Busby's the
schoolmaster's is the chief—

With two pear trees that don't bear ; one plum,
and an apple that every year is stripped by
a thief.

There's another small day-school too, kept by
the respectable Mrs Gaby,

A select establishment for six little boys, and one
big, and four little girls and a baby ;
There's a rectory with pointed gables and strange
odd chimneys that never smokes,
For the Rector don't live on his living like other
Christian sort of folks ;
There's a barber's once a week well filled with
rough black-bearded, shock-headed churls,
And a window with two feminine men's heads,
and two masculine ladies in false curls ;
There's a butcher, and a carpenter's, and a
plumber, and a small greengrocer's, and a
baker,
But he won't bake on a Sunday ; and there's a
sexton that's a coal merchant besides, and
an undertaker ;
And a toyshop, but not a whole one, for a village
can't compare with the London shops ;
One window sells drums, dolls, kites, carts, bats,
Clout's balls, and the other sells malt and
hops.
And Mrs Brown in domestic economy not to be
a bit behind her betters,

90 Hood's Humorous Poems

Lets her house to a milliner, a watchmaker, a
 rat-catcher, a cobbler, lives in it herself, and
 it's the post-office for letters.

Now I've gone through all the village—ay, from
 end to end, save and except one more house,
But I haven't come to that—and I hope I never
 shall—and that's the village Poor House !

JOHN DAY

A PATHETIC BALLAD.

“A day after the fair.”—*Old Proverb.*

JOHN DAY he was the biggest man
Of all the coachman kind,
With back too broad to be conceived
By any narrow mind.

The very horses knew his weight,
When he was in the rear,
And wished his box a Christmas box,
To come but once a year.

Alas! against the shafts of love,
What armour can avail?
Soon Cupid sent an arrow through
His scarlet coat of mail.

The barmaid of the Crown he loved,
From whom he never ranged,
For though he changed his horses there,
His love he never changed.

92 Hood's Humorous Poems

He thought her fairest of all fares,
So fondly love prefers ;
And often, among twelve outsides,
Deemed no outside like hers !

One day, as she was sitting down
Beside the porter-pump—
He came, and knelt with all his fat,
And made an offer plump.

Said she, " My taste will never learn
To like so huge a man,
So I must beg you will come here
As little as you can."

But still he stoutly urged his suit
With vows, and sighs, and tears,
Yet could not pierce her heart, altho'
He drove the Dart for years.

In vain he wooed, in vain he sued,
The maid was cold and proud,
And sent him off to Coventry,
While on his way to Stroud.


He fretted all the way to Stroud,
And thence all back to town,
The course of love was never smooth,
So his went up and down.

At last her coldness made him pine
To merely bones and skin,
But still he loved like one resolved
To love through thick and thin.

“O Mary! view my wasted back,
And see my dwindled calf;
Tho’ I have never had a wife,
I’ve lost my better half.”

Alas, in vain he still assail’d,
Her heart withstood the dint;
Though he had carried sixteen stone
He could not move a flint.

Worn out, at last he made a vow
To break his being’s link;
For he was so reduced in size,
At nothing he could shrink.



94 Hood's Humorous Poems

Now some will talk in water's praise,
 And waste a deal of breath,
But John, tho' he drank nothing else,
 He drank himself to death !

The cruel maid that caused his love
 Found out the fatal close,
For looking in the butt, she saw
 The butt-end of his woes.

Some say his spirit haunts the Crown,
 But that is only talk—
For after riding all his life,
 His ghost objects to walk !

LIEUTENANT LUFF

A COMIC BALLAD

ALL you that are too fond of wine,
Or any other stuff,
Take warning by the dismal fate
Of one Lieutenant Luff.
A sober man he might have been,
Except in one regard,
He did not like soft water,
So he took to drinking hard !

Said he, " Let others fancy slops,
And talk in praise of Tea,
But I am no Bohemian,
So do not like Bohea.
If wine's a poison, so is Tea,
Though in another shape :
What matter whether one is kill'd
By canister or grape ! "

96 Hood's Humorous Poems

According to this kind of taste
Did he indulge his drouth,
And being fond of Port, he made
A port-hole of his mouth !
A single pint he might have sipp'd
And not been out of sorts,
In geologic phrase—the rock
He split upon was quarts !

To “hold the mirror up to vice”
With him was hard, alas !
The worse for wine he often was,
But not “before a glass.”
No kind and prudent friend had he
To bid him drink no more,—
The only chequers in his course
Were at a tavern door !

Full soon the sad effects of this
His frame began to show,
For that old enemy the gout
Had taken him in toe !

And join'd with this an evil came
Of quite another sort—
For while he drank, himself, his purse
Was getting "something short."

For want of cash he soon had pawn'd
One half that he possessed,
And drinking showed him duplicates
Beforehand of the rest !
So now his creditors resolved
To seize on his assets ;
For why,—they found that his half-pay
Did not half pay his debts.

But Luff contrived a novel mode
His creditors to chouse ;
For his own execution he
Put into his own house !
A pistol to the muzzle charged
He took devoid of fear ;
Said he, " This barrel is my last,
So now for my last bier ! "

98 Hood's Humorous Poems

Against his lungs he aimed the slugs,
And not against his brain,
So he blew out his lights—and none
Could blow them in again !
A Jury for a Verdict met,
And gave it in these terms :—
“ We find as how as certain slugs
Has sent him to the worms ! ”

THE CHINA-MENDER

GOOD-MORNING, Mr What-d'ye-call !

Well ! here's another pretty job !

Lord help my Lady !—what a smash !—if you had
only heard her sob !

It was all through Mr Lambert : but for certain he
was winey,

To think for to go to sit down on a table full of
Chiney.

“ Deuce take your stupid head ! ” says my Lady to
his very face ;

But politeness, you know, is nothing when there's
Chiney in the case ;

And if ever a woman was fond of Chiney to a
passion,

It's my mistress, and all sorts of it, whether new or
old fashion.

100 Hood's Humorous Poems

Her brother's a sea-captain, and brings her home
shiploads—

Such bonzes, and such dragons, and nasty squat-
ting things like toads ;

And great nidnoddin' mandarins, with palsies in
the head :

I declare I've often dreamt of them, and had night-
mares in my bed.

But the frightfuller they are—lawk ! she loves them
all the better,

She'd have Old Nick himself made of Chiney if
they'd let her.

Lawk-a-mercy ! break her Chiney, and it's breaking
her very heart ;

If I touched it, she would very soon say, " Mary,
we must part."

To be sure she *is* unlucky : only Friday comes
Master Randall,

And breaks a broken spout, and fresh chips a tea-
cup handle :

He's a dear, sweet little child, but he will so finger
and touch,

And that's why my Lady doesn't take to children
much.

Well, there's stupid Mr Lambert, with his two
great-coat flaps,

Must go and sit down on the Dresden shepherd-
esses' laps,

As if there was no such things as rosewood chairs
in the room !

I couldn't have made a greater sweep with the
handle of the broom.

Mercy on us ! how my mistress began to rave and
tear !

Well, after all, there's nothing like good ironstone
ware for wear.

If ever I marry, that's flat, I'm sure it won't be
John Dockery—

I should be a wretched woman in a shop full of
crockery.

I should never like to wipe it, though I love to be
neat and tidy,

And afraid of mad bulls on market-days every
Monday and Friday.

I'm very much mistook if Mr Lambert's will be a
catch ;

The breaking the Chiney will be the breaking-off
of his own match.

104 Hood's Humorous Poems

To be sure it is a sight that might draw tears from
dogs and cats,

Here's this pretty little pagoda, now, has lost four
of its cocked hats.

Be particular with the pagoda : and then here's
this pretty bowl—

The Chinese Prince is making love to nothing
because of this hole ;

And here's another Chinese man, with a face just
like a doll,

Do stick his pigtail on again, and just mend his
parasol.

But I needn't tell you what to do ; only do it out
of hand,

And charge whatever you like to charge—my Lady
won't make a stand.

Well ! good morning, Mr What-d'ye-call, for it's
time our gossip ended :

And you know the proverb, the less as is said, the
sooner the Chiney's mended.

PLAYING AT SOLDIERS

“Who'll serve the King?”

AN ILLUSTRATION

WHAT little urchin is there never
Hath had that early scarlet fever,
Of martial trappings caught?
Trappings well call'd—because they trap
And catch full many a country chap
To go where fields are fought!

What little urchin with a rag
Hath never made a little flag
(Our plate will show the manner),
And wooed each tiny neighbour still,
Tommy or Harry, Dick or Will,
To come beneath the banner

Just like that ancient shape of mist
In Hamlet, crying “'List, oh 'list
Come, who will serve the king

106 Hood's Humorous Poems

And strike frog-eating Frenchmen dead,
And cut off Bonyparty's head?—
And all that sort of thing.

So used I, when I was a boy,
To march with military toy,
And ape the soldier's life ;—
And with a whistle or a hum,
I thought myself a Duke of Drum
At least, or Earl of Fife.

With gun of tin and sword of lath,
Lord ! how I walk'd in glory's path
With regimental mates,
By sound of trump and rub-a-dubs—
To 'siege the washhouse—charge the tubs—
Or storm the garden gates.

Ah me ! my retrospective soul !
As over memory's muster-roll
I cast my eyes anew,
My former comrades all the while
Rise up before me, rank and file,
And form in dim review.

Ay, there they stand, and dress in line,
 Lubbock, and Fenn, and David Vine,
 And dark "Jamakey Forde!"
 And limping Wood, and "Cocky Hawes,"
 Our captain always made, because
 He had a *real* sword!

Long Lawrence, Natty Smart, and Soame,
 Who said he had a gun at home,
 But that was all a brag;
 Ned Ryder, too, that used to sham
 A prancing horse, and big Sam Lamb
 That *would* hold up the flag!

Tom Anderson, and "Dunny White,"
 Who never right-abouted right,
 For he was deaf and dumb;
 Jack Pike, Jem Crack, and Sandy Gray,
 And Dickey Bird, that wouldn't play
 Unless he had the drum.

And Peter Holt, and Charley Jepp,
 A chap that never kept the step—
 No more did "Surly Hugh;"


108 Hood's Humorous Poems

Bob Harrington, and "Fighting Jim"—
We often had to halt for him,
To let him tie his shoe.

"Quarrelsome Scott," and Martin Dick,
That kill'd the bantam cock, to stick
The plumes within his hat ;
Bill Hook, and little Tommy Grout,
That got so thump'd for calling out
"Eyes right !" to "Squinting Matt."

Dan Simpson, that, with Peter Dodd,
Was always in the awkward squad,
And those two greedy Blakes
That took our money to the fair,
To buy the corps a trumpet there,
And laid it out in cakes.

Where are they now ?—an open war
With open mouth declaring for ?—
Or fall'n in bloody fray ?
Compell'd to tell the truth I am,
Their fights all ended with the sham,—
Their soldiership in play.



Brave Soame sends cheeses out in trucks,
 And Martin sells the cock he plucks,
 And Jepp now deals in wine ;
 Harrington bears a lawyer's bag,
 And warlike Lamb retains his flag,
 But on a tavern sign.

They tell me Cocky Hawes's sword
 Is seen upon a broker's board :
 And as for "Fighting Jim,"
 In Bishopsgate, last Whitsuntide,
 His unresisting cheek I spied
 Beneath a Quaker brim !

Quarrelsome Scott is in the Church,
 For Ryder now your eye much search
 The marts of silk and lace—
 Bird's drums are filled with figs, and mute,
 And I—I've got a substitute
 To Soldier in my place !

QUEEN MAB

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish :

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade ;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade.

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
From left to right she weaves her rings,
And then it dreams all through the night
Of only ugly, horrid things !

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away ;
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

MORNING MEDITATIONS

LET Taylor preach upon a morning breezy,
How well to rise while nights and larks are flying,—
For my part getting up seems not so easy
By half as *lying*.

What if the lark does carol in the sky,
Soaring beyond the sight to find him out—
Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly?
I'm not a trout.

Talk not to me of bees and such like hums,
The smell of sweet herbs at the morning prime—
Only lie long enough, and bed becomes
A bed of *time*.

To me Dan Phœbus and his car are nought,
His steeds that paw impatiently about,—
Let them enjoy, say I, as horses ought,
The first turn-out !

Right beautiful the dewy meads appear
Besprinkled by the rosy-finger'd girl ;
What then,—if I prefer my pillow-beer
To early pearl ?

My stomach is not ruled by other men's,
And grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs
“ Wherefore should master rise before the hens
Have laid their eggs ? ”

Why from a comfortable pillow start
To see faint flushes in the east awaken ?
A fig, say I, for any streaky part,
Excepting bacon.

An early riser Mr Gray has drawn,
Who used to haste the dewy grass among,
“ To meet the sun upon the upland lawn ”—
Well—he died young.

With charwomen such early hours agree,
And sweeps, that earn betimes their bit and sup ;
But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be
“ All up—all up ! ”

114 Hood's Humorous Poems

So here I'll lie, my morning calls deferring,
Till something nearer to the stroke of noon ;
A man that's fond precociously of *stirring*,
Must be a spoon.

THE DEMON SHIP

'Twas off the Wash—the sun went down—the sea
looked black and grim,
For stormy clouds, with murky fleece, were
mustering at the brim ;
Titanic shades ! enormous gloom !—as if the solid
night
Of Erebus rose suddenly to seize upon the light !
It was a time for mariners to bear a wary eye,
With such a dark conspiracy between the sea and
sky !
Down went my helm—close reef'd—the tack held
freely in my hand—
With ballast snug—I put about, and scudded for
the land.
Loud hissed the sea beneath her lee—my little
boat flew fast,
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon
the blast.

116 Hood's Humorous Poems

Lord ! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining sail !

What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce assaults of hail !

What darksome caverns yawned before ! what jagged steeps behind !

Like battle-steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing in the wind.

Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the chase,

But where it sank another rose and gallop'd in its place ;

As black as night—they turned to white, and cast against the cloud

A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturned a sailor's shroud :

Still flew my boat ; alas ! alas ! her course was nearly run !

Behold yon fatal billow rise—ten billows heap'd in one !

With fearful speed the dreary mass came rolling, rolling fast,

As if the scooping sea contain'd one only wave at last !

Still on it came, with horrid roar, a swift pursuing
grave ;

It seemed as though some cloud had turn'd its
hugeness to a wave !

Its briny sleet began to beat beforehand in my
face—

I felt the rearward keel begin to climb its swelling
base !

I saw its alpine hoary head impending over mine !
Another pulse—and down it rush'd—an avalanche
of brine !

Brief pause had I, on God to cry, or think of wife
and home ;


The waters closed—and when I shriek'd, I shriek'd
below the foam !

Beyond that rush I have no hint of any after deed—
For I was tossing on the waste, as senseless as a
weed.

.

“Where am I?—in the breathing world, or in the
world of death?”

With sharp and sudden pang I drew another birth
of breath ;



118 Hood's Humorous Poems

My eyes drank in a doubtful light, my ears a
doubtful sound—

And was that ship a *real* ship whose tackle seem'd
around ?

A moon, as if the earthly moon, was shining up
aloft ;

But were those beams the very beams that I had
seen so oft ?

A face, that mocked the human face, before me
watched alone ;

But were those eyes the eyes of man that look'd
against my own ?

Oh, never may the moon again disclose me such
a sight

As met my gaze, when first I look'd, on that
accursèd night !

I've seen a thousand horrid shapes begot of fierce
extremes

Of fever ; and most frightful things have haunted
in my dreams—

Hyenas—cats—blood-loving bats—and apes with
hateful stare—

Pernicious snakes, and shaggy bulls—the lion, and
she-bear—

Strong enemies, with Judas looks, of treachery and
spite—

Detested features, hardly dimmed and banished
by the light !

Pale-sheeted ghosts, with gory locks, upstarting
from their tombs—

All phantasies and images that flit in midnight
glooms—

Hags, goblins, demons, lemures, have made me
all aghast,—

But nothing like that GRIMLY ONE who stood
beside the mast !

His cheek was black—his brow was black—his
eyes and hair as dark :

His hand was black, and where it touched, it left
a sable mark ;

His throat was black, his vest the same, and when
I looked beneath,

120 Hood's Humorous Poems

His breast was black—all, all was black, except
his grinning teeth.

His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric
slaves !

Oh horror ! e'en the ship was black that ploughed
the inky waves !

“ Alas ! ” I cried, “ for love of truth and blessed
mercy's sake !

Where am I ? in what dreadful ship ? upon what
dreadful lake ?

What shape is that, so very grim, and black as any
coal ?

It is Mahound, the Evil One, and he has gained
my soul !

Oh, mother dear ! my tender nurse ! dear meadows
that beguil'd

My happy days, when I was yet a little sinless
child,—

My mother dear—my native fields, I never more
shall see :

I'm sailing in the Devil's Ship, upon the Devil's
Sea ! ”

Loud laughed that SABLE MARINER, and loudly in
return

His sooty crew sent forth a laugh that rang from
stem to stern—

A dozen pair of grimly cheeks were crumpled on
the nonce—

As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out
at once :

A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoyed the merry
fit,

With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like
Demons of the Pit.

They crowed their fill, and then the Chief made
answer for the whole ;—

“Our skins,” said he, “are black, ye see, because
we carry coal ;

You’ll find your mother sure enough, and see your
native fields—

For this here ship has picked you up—the Mary
Ann of Shields !”

THE DROWNING DUCKS

AMONGST the sights that Mrs Bond
Enjoyed yet grieved at more than others,
Were little ducklings in a pond,
Swimming about beside their mothers—
Small things like living water-lilies,
But yellow as the daffo-*dillies*.

“It’s very hard,” she used to moan,
“That other people have their ducklings
To grace their waters—mine alone
Have never any pretty chucklings.”
For why!—each little yellow navy
Went down—all downy—to old Davy!

She had a lake—a pond, I mean—
Its wave was rather thick than pearly—
She had two ducks, their napes were green—
She had a drake, his tail was curly,—


The Drowning Ducks 123

Yet 'spite of drake, and ducks, and pond,
No little ducks had Mrs Bond !

The birds were both the best of mothers—
The nests had eggs—the eggs had luck—
The infant D's came forth like others—
But there, alas ! the matter stuck !
They might as well have all died addle
As die when they began to paddle !

For when, as native instinct taught her,
The mother set her brood afloat,
They sank ere long right under water,
Like any overloaded boat ;
They were web-footed too to see,
As ducks and spiders ought to be !

No peccant humour in a gander
Brought havoc on her little folks,—
No poaching cook—a frying pander
To appetite,—destroyed their yolks,—
Beneath her very eyes, Od rot 'em !
They went, like plummets, to the bottom.



124 Hood's Humorous Poems


The thing was strange—a contradiction
 It seemed of nature and her works !
For little ducks, beyond conviction,
 Should float without the help of corks :
Great Johnson it bewildered him—
To hear of ducks that could not swim !

Poor Mrs Bond ! what could she do
 But change the breed—and she tried divers
Which dived as all seemed born to do ;
 No little ones were e'er survivors—
Like those that copy gems I'm thinking,
They all were given to die-sinking !

In vain their downy coats were shorn ;
 They floundered still !—Batch after batch
 went !

The little fools seemed only born
 And hatched for nothing but a hatchment !
Whene'er they launched—oh, sight of wonder !
Like fires the water “ got them under ! ”

No woman ever gave their lucks
 A better chance than Mrs Bond did ;



The Drowning Ducks 125


At last quite out of heart and ducks,
She gave her pond up, and desponded ;
For Death among the water-lilies,
Cried "*Duc* ad me " to all her dillies !

But though resolved to breed no more,
She brooded often on this riddle—
Alas ! 'twas darker than before !

At last about the summer's middle,
What Johnson, Mrs Bond, or none did,
To clear the matter up the Sun did !

The thirsty Sirius, dog-like drank
So deep, his furious tongue to cool,
The shallow waters sank and sank,
And lo, from out the wasted pool,
Too hot to hold them any longer,
There crawled some eels as big as conger !

I wish all folks would look a bit,
In such a case below the surface ;
And when the eels were caught and split
By Mrs Bond, just think of *her* face,



126 Hood's Humorous Poems

In each inside at once to spy
A duckling turned to gible-pie !

The sight at once explained the case,
 Making the Dame look rather silly,
The tenants of that *Eely Place*
 Had found the way to *Pick a Dilly*,
And so, by under-water suction,
Had wrought the little ducks' abduction.

THE LOST HEIR

"Oh, where, and oh where
Is my bonnie laddie gone?"

Old Song.

ONE day, as I was going by
That part of Holborn christened High,
I heard a loud and sudden cry
That chill'd my very blood ;
And lo ! from out a dirty alley,
Where pigs and Irish wont to rally,
I saw a crazy woman sally,
Bedaub'd with grease and mud.
She turn'd her East, she turn'd her West,
Staring like Pythoness possest,
With streaming hair and heaving breast,
As one stark mad with grief.
This way and that she wildly ran,
Jostling with woman and with man—
Her right hand held a'frying pan,
The left a lump of beef.

128 Hood's Humorous Poems

At last her frenzy seem'd to reach
A point just capable of speech,
And with a tone almost a screech,
As wild as ocean birds,
Or female Ranter mov'd to preach,
She gave her "sorrow words."

"Oh Lord! oh dear, my heart will break, I shall
go stick stark staring wild!

Has ever a one seen anything about the streets
like a crying lost-looking child?

Lawk help me, I don't know where to look, or to
run, if I only knew which way—

A child as is lost about London streets, and
especially Seven Dials, is a needle in a bottle
of hay.

I am all in a quiver—get out of my sight, do, you
wretch, you little Kitty M'Nab!

You promised to have half an eye to him, you know
you did, you dirty deceitful young drab:

The last time as ever I see him, poor thing, was
with my own blessed motherly eyes,
Sitting as good as gold in the gutter, a-playing at
making little dirt pies.

I wonder he left the court where he was better off
than all the other young boys,
With two bricks, an old shoe, nine oyster-shells,
and a dead kitten by way of toys.
When his Father comes home, and he always
comes home as sure as ever the clock strikes
one,
He'll be rampant, he will, at his child being lost ;
and the beef and the inguns not done !
La bless you, good folks, mind your own consarns,
and don't be making a mob in the street ;
Oh Serjeant M'Farlane ! you have not come across
my poor little boy, have you, in your beat ?
Do, good people move on ! don't stand staring at
me like a parcel of stupid stuck pigs ;
Saints forbid ! but he's p'r'aps been inviggled away
up a court for the sake of his clothes by the
prigs ;
He'd a very good jacket, for certain, for I bought
it myself for a shilling one day in Rag Fair ;
And his trousers considering not very much
patch'd, and red plush, hey was once his
Father's best pair.

130 Hood's Humorous Poems

His shirt, it's very lucky I'd got washing in the
tub, or that might have gone with the rest ;
But he'd got on a very good pinafore with only two
slits and a burn on the breast.

He'd a goodish sort of hat, if the crown was sew'd
in, and not quite so much jagg'd at the
brim,

With one shoe on, and the other shoe is a boot,
and not a fit, and you'll know by that if it's
him.

Except being so well dress'd my mind would mis-
give, some old beggar woman in want of an
orphan,

Had borrow'd the child to go a-begging with, but
I'd rather see him laid out in his coffin !

Do, good people, move on, such a rabble of boys !
I'll break every bone of 'em I come near,

Go home—you're spilling the porter—go home—
Tommy Jones, go along home with your beer.

This day is the sorrowfullest day of my life, ever
since my name was Betty Morgan,

Them vile Savoyards ! they lost him once before
all along of following a monkey and an organ.

Oh my Billy—my head will turn right round—if
 he's got kiddynapp'd with them Italians,
 They'll make him a plaster parish image boy, they
 will, the outlandish tatterdemalions.

Billy—where are you, Billy? I'm as hoarse as a
 crow, with screaming for ye, you young
 sorrow !

And sha'n't have half a voice, no more I sha'n't, for
 crying fresh herrings to-morrow.

Oh Billy, you're bursting my heart in two, and my
 life won't be of no more vally,

If I'm to see other folks' darlin's, and none of
 mine, playing like angels in our alley.

And what shall I do but cry out my eyes, when I
 looks at the old three-legged chair

As Billy used to make coach and horses of, and
 there a'n't no Billy there !

I would run all the wide world over to find him, if
 I only know'd where to run,

Little Murphy, now I remember, was once lost for
 a month through stealing a penny bun,—

The Lord forbid of any child of mine ! I think it
 would kill me railey,

132 Hood's Humorous Poems

To find my Bill holdin' up his little innocent hand
at the Old Bailey.

For though I say it as oughtn't, yet I will say, you
may search for miles and mileses,

And not find one better brought up, and more
pretty behaved, from one end to t'other of St
Giles's.

And if I called him a beauty, it's no lie, but only
as a mother ought to speak ;

You never set eyes on a more handsomer face, only
it hasn't been washed for a week ;

As for hair, tho' it's red, it's the most nicest hair
when I've time to just show it the comb ;


I'll owe 'em five pounds, and a blessing besides,
as will only bring him safe and sound home.

He's blue eyes, and not to be call'd a squint,
though a little cast he's certainly got ;

And his nose is still a good un, tho' the bridge is
broke, by his falling on a pewter pint pot ;

He's got the most elegant wide mouth in the world,
and very large teeth for his age ;

And quite as fit as Mrs Murdockson's child to
play Cupid on the Drury Lane stage.



And then he has got such dear winning ways—but
oh, I never never shall see him no more !

Oh dear ! to think of losing him just after nursing
him back from death's door !

Only the very last month when the windfalls, hang
'em, was at twenty a penny !

And the threepence he'd got by grottoing was
spent in plums, and sixty for a child is too
many.

And the cholera man came and whitewash'd us
all, and, drat him, made a seize of our
hog.

It's no use to send the crier to cry him about, he's
such a blunderin' drunken old dog ;

The last time he was fetched to find a lost child,
he was guzzling with his bell at the Crown,

And went and cried a boy instead of a girl, for a
distracted Mother and Father about Town.

Billy—where are you, Billy, I say? come Billy,
come home, to your best of mothers !

I'm scared when I think of them cabroleys, they
drive so, they'd run over their own Sisters and
Brothers.

134 Hood's Humorous Poems

Or may be he's stole by some chimbly-sweeping
wretch, to stick fast in narrow flues and what
not,

And be poked up behind with a picked pointed
pole, when the soot has ketch'd, and the
chimbly's red hot.

Oh, I'd give the whole wide world, if the world was
mine, to clap my two longin' eyes on his face.
For he's my darlin' of darlin's, and if he don't soon
come back, you'll see me drop stone dead on
the place.

I only wish I'd got him safe in these two motherly
arms, and wouldn't I hug him and kiss him !
Lawk ! I never knew what a precious he was—but
a child don't feel like a child till you miss
him.

Why, there he is ! Punch and Judy hunting, the
young wretch, it's that Billy as sartin as sin !
But let me get him home, with a good grip of his
hair, and I'm blest if he shall have a whole
bone in his skin ! ”

THE ASSISTANT DRAPER'S PETITION

PITY the sorrows of a class of men,
Who, though they bow to fashion and frivolity,
No fancied claims or woes fictitious pen,
But wrongs ell-wide, and of a lasting quality.

Oppress'd and discontented with our lot,
Amongst the clamorous we take our station ;
A host of Ribbon men—yet is there not
One piece of Irish in our agitation.

We do revere her Majesty the Queen ;
We venerate our Glorious Constitution ;
We joy King William's advent should have been,
And only want a Counter Revolution.

136 Hood's Humorous Poems


'Tis not Lord Russell and his final measure,
'Tis not Lord Melbourne's counsel to the throne,
'Tis not this Bill, or that, gives us displeasure,
The measures we dislike are all our own.

The Cash Law the "Great Western" loves to name,
The tone our foreign policy pervading ;
The Corn Laws—none of these we care to blame,—
Our evils we refer to over-trading.

By tax or Tithe our murmurs are not drawn ;
We reverence the Church—but hang the cloth !
We love her ministers—but curse the lawn !
We have, alas ! too much to do with both !

We love the sex ;—to serve them is a bliss !
We trust they find us civil, never surly ;
All that we hope of female friends is this,
That their last linen may be wanted early.

Ah ! who can tell the miseries of men
That serve the very cheapest shops in town ?
Till faint and weary, they leave off at ten,
Knock'd up by ladies beating of 'em down !



Assistant Draper's Petition 137

But has not Hamlet his opinion given—
O Hamlet had a heart for Drapers' servants !
"That custom is"—say custom after seven—
"More honour'd in the breach than the observ-
ance."

O come then, gentle ladies, come in time,
O'erwhelm our counters, and unload our shelves !
Torment us all until the seventh chime,
But let us have the remnant to ourselves !

We wish of knowledge to lay in a stock,
And not remain in ignorance incurable ;—
To study Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Locke,
And other fabrics that have proved so durable.

We long for thoughts of intellectual kind,
And not to go bewilder'd to our beds ;
With stuff and fustian taking up the mind,
And pins and needles running in our heads !

For oh ! the brain gets very dull and dry,
Selling from morn till night for cash or credit ;
Or with a vacant face and vacant eye,
Watching cheap prints that Knight did never edit. —

138 Hood's Humorous Poems

Till sick with toil, and lassitude extreme,
We often think, when we are dull and vapoury,
The bliss of Paradise was so supreme,
Because that Adam did not deal in drapery.

THE VOLUNTEER

I

'TWAS in that memorable year
France threatened to put off in
Flat-bottomed boats, intending each
To be a British coffin,
To make sad widows of our wives,
And every babe an orphan :—

II

When coats were made of scarlet cloaks,
And heads were dredged with flour,
I 'listed in the Lawyers' Corps,
Against the battle hour ;
A perfect Volunteer—for why ?
I brought my "will and pow'r."

III

One dreary day—a day of dread,
Like Cato's, over-cast—
About the hour of six (the morn
And I were breaking fast),
There came a loud and sudden sound,
That struck me all aghast !

IV

A dismal sort of morning roll,
That was not to be eaten :
Although it was no skin of mine
But parchment that was beaten,
I felt tattooed through all my flesh,
Like any Otaheitan.

V

My jaws with utter dread enclosed
The morsel I was munching
And terror locked them up so tight,
My very teeth went crunching
All through my bread and tongue at once,
Like sandwich made at lunching.

VI

My hand that held the teapot fast,
Stiffened, but yet unsteady,
Kept pouring, pouring, pouring o'er
The cup in one long eddy,
Till both my hose were marked with *tea*,
As they were marked already.

VII

I felt my visage turn from red
To white—from cold to hot ;
But it was nothing wonderful
My colour changed, I wot,
For, like some variable silks,
I felt that I was shot.

VIII

And looking forth with anxious eye,
From my snug upper storey,
I saw our melancholy corps
Going to beds all gory ;
The pioneers seemed very loth
To axe their way to glory.

IX

The captain marched as mourners march,
The ensign too seemed lagging,
And many more, although they were
No ensigns, took to flagging—
Like corpses in the Serpentine,
Methought they wanted dragging.

X

But while I watched, the thought of death
Came like a chilly gust,
And lo ! I shut the window down,
With very little lust
To join so many marching men,
That soon might be March dust.

XI

Quoth I, "Since Fate ordains it so,
Our foe the coast must land on ;"
I felt so warm beside the fire
I cared not to abandon ;
Our hearths and homes are always things
That patriots make a stand on.

XII

“The fools that fight abroad for home,”
 Thought I, “may get a wrong one ;
 Let those that have no home at all
 Go battle for a long one.”
 The mirror here confirmed me this
 Reflection, by a strong one :

XIII

For there, where I was wont to shave,
 And deck me like Adonis,
 There stood the leader of our foes,
 With vultures for his cronies—
 No Corsican, but Death itself,
 The Bony of all Bonies.

XIV

A horrid sight it was, and sad,
 To see the grisly chap
 Put on my crimson livery,
 And then begin to clap
 My helmet on—ah me ! it felt
 Like any felon’s cap.

1101

XV

My plume seemed borrowed from a hearse,
An undertaker's crest ;
My epaulettes like coffin-plates ;
My belt so heavy press'd,
Four pipeclay cross-roads seem'd to lie
At once upon my breast.

XVI

My brazen breastplate only lack'd
A little heap of salt,
To make me like a corpse full dress'd.
Preparing for the vault—
To set up what the Poet calls
My everlasting halt.

XVI

This funeral show inclined me quite
To peace :—and here I am !
Whilst better lions go to war,
Enjoying with the lamb
A lengthen'd fe, that might have been
A Martial Epigram.

HIT OR MISS

"Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time."—BURNS.

ONE morn—it was the very morn
September's sportive month was born—
The hour, about the sunrise, early :
The sky grey, sober, still, and pearly,
With sundry orange streaks and tinges
Through daylight's door, at cracks and hinges ;
The air calm, bracing, freshly cool,
As if just skimm'd from off a pool ;
The scene, red, russet, yellow, leaden,
From stubble, fern, and leaves that deaden,
Save here and there a turnip patch,
Too verdant with the rest to match ;
And far a-field a hazy figure,
Some roaming lover of the trigger.
Meanwhile the level light perchance

148 Hood's Humorous Poems

Nor if he had been cut, 'twas plain
He did not mean to come again.
Of course the pair soon spied each other ;
But neither seemed to own a brother ;
The course on both sides took a curve,
As dogs when shy are apt to swerve ;
But each o'er back and shoulder throwing
A look to watch the other's going,
Till, having cleared sufficient ground,
With one accord they turned them round,
And squatting down, for forms not caring,
At one another fell to staring ;
As if not proof against a touch
Of what plagues humankind so much,
A prying itch to get at notions
Of all their neighbours' looks and motions.
Sir Don at length was first to rise—
The better dog in point of size,
And, snuffing all the ground between,
Set off, with easy jaunty mien ;
While Dash, the stranger, rose to greet him,
And made a dozen steps to meet him—
Their noses touch'd, and rubbed awhile

(Some savage nations use the style),
And then their tails a wag began,
Though on a very cautious plan,
But in their signals quantum suff.
To say "A civil dog enough."

Thus having held out olive branches,
They sank again, though not on haunches,
But couchant, with their under jaws
Resting between the two forepaws,
The prelude, on a luckier day,
Or sequel, to a game of play :
But now they were in dumps, and thus
Began their worries to discuss,
The pointer, coming to the point
The first, on times so out of joint.
"Well, Friend,—so here's a new September
As fine a first as I remember ;
And, thanks to such an early Spring,
Plenty of birds, and strong on wing."

"Birds !" cried the crusty little chap,
As sharp and sudden as a snap,


150 Hood's Humorous Poems

"A weasel suck them in the shell !
What matter birds, or flying well,
Or fly at all, or sporting weather,
If fools with guns can't hit a feather !"

"Ay, there's the rub, indeed," said Don,
Putting his gravest visage on ;
"In vain we beat our beaten way,
And bring our *organs* into play,
Unless the proper killing kind
Of *barrel tunes* are played behind :
But when *we* shoot—that's me and Squire—
We hit as often as we fire."

"More luck for you !" cried little Woolly
Who felt the cruel contrast fully ;
More luck for you, and Squire to boot !
We miss as often as we shoot !"

"Indeed !—No wonder you're unhappy !
I thought you looking rather snappy ;
But fancied, when I saw you jogging,
You'd had an overdose of flogging ;
Or p'r'aps the gun its range had tried
While you were ranging rather wide."



"Me! running—running wide—and hit!
Me shot! what, pepper'd!—Deuce a bit!
I almost wish I had! That Dunce,
My master, then would hit for once!
Hit me! Lord, how you talk! why, zounds!
He couldn't hit a pack of hounds!"

"Well, that must be a case provoking.
What, *never*—but, you dog, you're joking!
I see a sort of wicked grin
About your jaw you're keeping in."
"A joke! an old tin kettle's clatter
Would be as much a joking matter.
To tell the truth, that dog-disaster
Is just the type of me and master,
When fagging over hill and dale,
With his vain rattle at my tail.
Bang, bang, and bang, the whole day's run,
But *leading* nothing but his gun—
The very shot, I fancy, hisses,
It's sent upon such awful misses."


"Of course it does! But perhaps the fact is
You master's hand is out of practice!"

152 Hood's Humorous Poems

“ Practice?—No doctor, where you will,
Has finer—but he cannot kill !
These three years past, thro’ furze and furrow,
All covers I have hunted thorough ;
Flush’d cocks and snipes about the moors ;
And put up hares by scores and scores ;
Coveys of birds, and lots of pheasants ;—
Yes, game enough to send in presents
To ev’ry friend he has in town,
Provided he had knock’d it down :
But no—the whole three years together,
He has not giv’n me flick or feather—
For all that I have had to do
I wish I had been missing too ! ”

“ Well,—such a hand would drive me mad ;
But is he truly quite so bad ? ”

“ Bad !—worse !—you cannot underscore him ;
If I could put up, just before him,
The great Balloon that paid the visit
Across the water, he would miss it !
Bite him ! I do believe, indeed,
It’s in his very blood and breed !



It marks his life, and runs all through it ;
What can be miss'd he's sure to do it.
Last Monday he came home to Tooting,
Dog-tired, as if he'd been a-shooting,
And kicks at me to vent his rage—
'Get out !' says he—'I've miss'd the stage !'
Of course, thought I—what chance of hitting ?
You'd miss the Norwich waggon, sitting ! ”

“ Why, he must be the county's scoff !
He ought to leave, and not let, off !
As fate denies his shooting wishes,
Why don't he take to catching fishes ?
Or any other sporting game,
That don't require a bit of aim ? ”
“ Not he !—Some dogs of human kind
Will hunt by sight, because they're blind,
My master angle !—no such luck !—
There he might strike, who never struck,
My master shoots because he can't,
And has an eye that aims aslant ;
Nay, just by way of making trouble,
He's changed his single gun for double ;

154 Hood's Humorous Poems

And now, as girls a-walking do,
His *misses* go by two and two !
I wish he had the mange, or reason
As good, to miss the shooting season ! ”

“ Why yes, it must be main unpleasant
To point to covey, or to pheasant ;
For snobs, who, when the point is mooting,
Think *letting fly* as good as shooting ! ”

“ Snobs !—if he'd wear his ruffled shirts,
Or coats with water-wagtail skirts,
Or trowsers in the place of smalls,
Or those tight fits he wears at balls,
Or pumps, and boots with tops, mayhap,
Why we might pass for Snip and Snap,
And shoot like blazes ! fly or sit,
And none would stare, unless we hit.
But no—to make the more combustion;
He goes in gaiters and in fustian,
Like Captain Ross, or Topping Sparks,
And deuce a miss but some one marks !
For keepers, shy of such encroachers,
Dog us about like common poachers !


Many's the covey I've gone by,
When underneath a sporting eye ;
Many a puss I've twigg'd, and pass'd her—
I miss 'em to prevent my master !”

“ And so should I, in such a case !
There's nothing feels so like disgrace,
Or gives you such a scurvy look—
A kick and pail of slush from Cook,
Cleftsticks, or kettle, all in one,
As standing to a missing gun !
It's whirr ! and bang ! and off you bound,
To catch your bird before the ground ;
But no—a pump and ginger pop
As soon would get a bird to drop !
So there you stand, quite struck a-heap,
Till all your tail is gone to sleep ;
A sort of stiffness in your nape,
Holding your head well up to gape ;
While off go birds across the ridges,
First small as flies, and then as midges,
Cocksure, as they are living chicks,
Death's Door is not at Number Six !”

156 Hood's Humorous Poems

"Yes ! yes ! and then you look at master,
The cause of all the late disaster,
Who gives a stamp and raps an oath
At gun, or birds, or maybe both ;
P'raps curses you, and all your kin,
To raise the hair upon your skin !
Then loads, rams down, and fits new caps,
To go and hunt for more miss-haps !"

Yes ! yes ! but, sick and sad, you feel
But one long wish to go to heel ;
You cannot scent, for cutting mugs—
Your nose is turning up, like Pug's ;
You can't hold up, but plod and mope ;
Your tail like sodden end of rope,
That o'er a wind-bound vessel's side
Has soak'd in harbour, tide and tide.
On thorns and scratches, till that moment
Unnoticed, you begin to comment ;
You never felt such bitter brambles,
Such heavy soil, in all your rambles !
You never felt your fleas so vicious !
Till, sick of life so unpropitious,



You wish at last to end the passage,
That you were dead, and in your sassage ! ”

“ Yes ! that’s a miss from end to end !
But, zounds ! you draw so well, my friend,
You’ve made me shiver, skin and gristle,
As if I heard my master’s whistle !
Though how you came to learn the knack—
I thought your squire was quite a crack ! ”

“ And so he is !—He always hits—
And sometimes hard, and all to bits.
But ere with him our tongues we task,
I’ve still one little thing to ask ;
Namely, with such a random master,
Of course you sometimes want a plaster ?
Such missing hands make game of more
Than ever passed for game before—
A pounded pig—a widow’s cat—
A patent ventilating hat—
For shot, like mud, when thrown so thick,
Will find a coat whereon to stick ! ”

“ What ! accidentals, as they’re term’d ?
No, never—none—since I was worm’d—

158 Hood's Humorous Poems

Not e'en the Keeper's fatted calves,—
My master does not miss by halves !
His shot are like poor orphans, hurl'd
Abroad upon the whole wide world,—
But whether they be blown to dust,
As oftentimes I think they must,
Or melted down too near the sun,
What comes of them is known to none—
I never found, since I could bark,
A Barn that bore my master's mark !”

“Is that the case?—why then, my brother,
Would we could swap with one another !
Or take the Squire, with all my heart,
Nay, all my liver, so we part !
He'll hit you hares—(he uses cartridge)
He'll hit you cocks—he'll hit a partridge ;
He'll hit a snipe—he'll hit a pheasant ;
He'll hit—he'll hit whatever's present ;
He'll always hit,—as that's your wish—
His pepper never lacks a dish !”

“Come, come, you banter—let's be serious ;
I'm sure that I am half delirious,

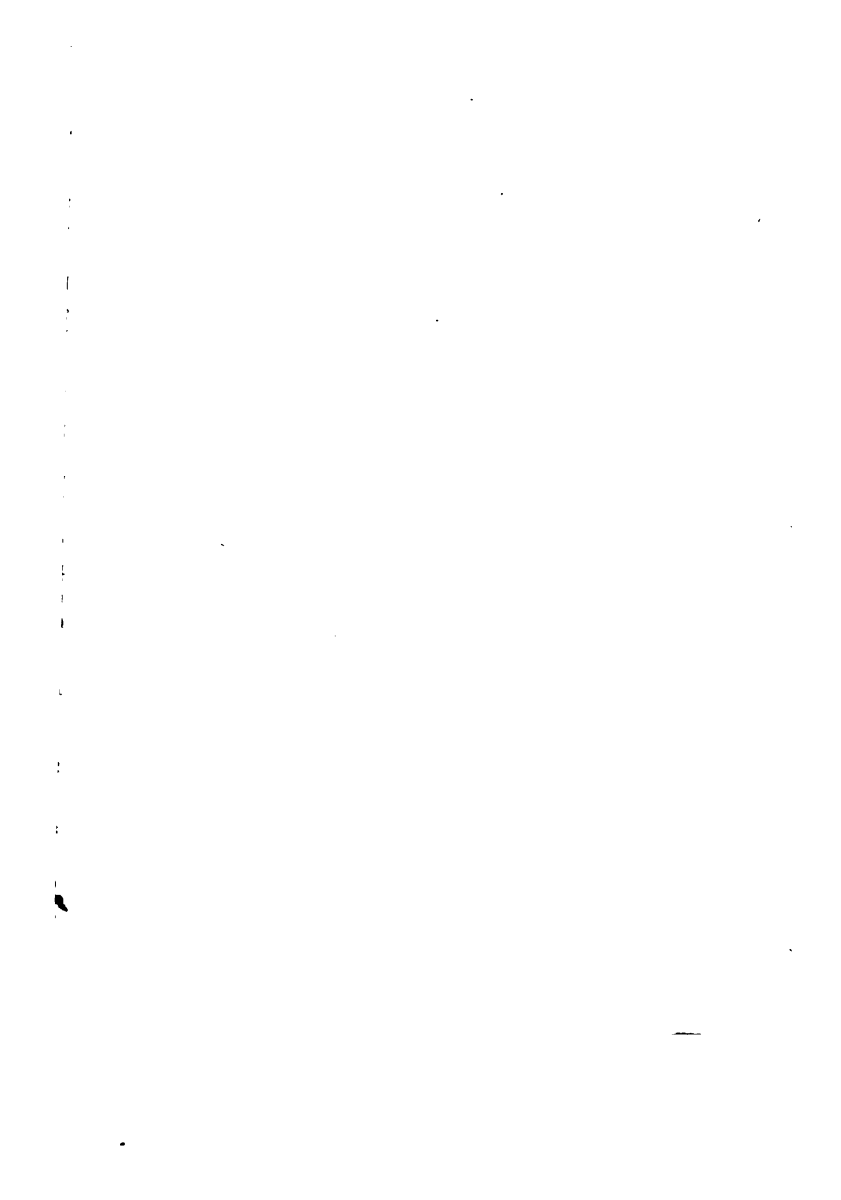
Your picture set me so a-sighing—
But does he shoot so well—shoot flying?”

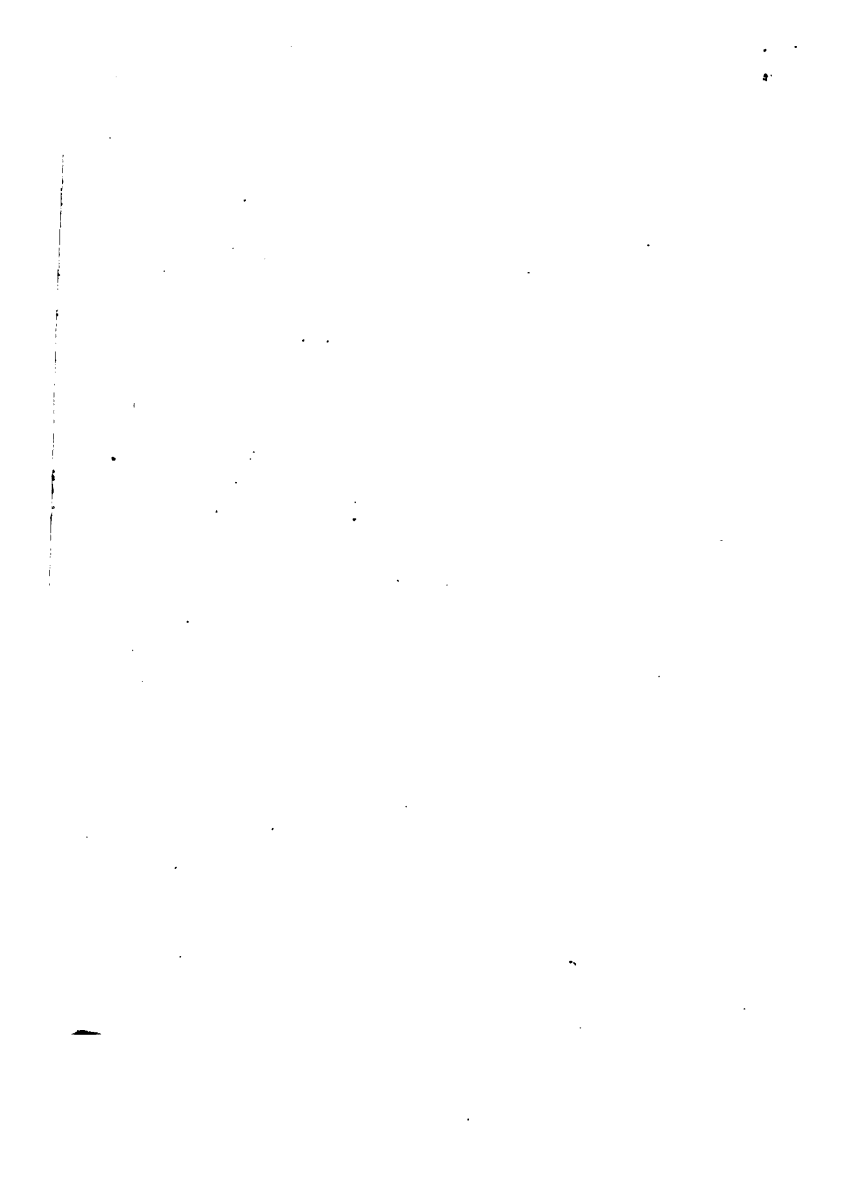
“Shoot flying? Yes—and running, walking,—
I’ve seen him shoot two farmers talking—
He’ll hit the game, whene’er he can,
But failing that he’ll hit a man,
A boy— a horse’s tail or head—
Or make a pig a pig of lead,—
Oh, friend! they say no dog as yet,
However hot, was known to sweat,
But sure I am that I perspire
Sometimes *before my master’s fire!*
Misses! no, no, he *always* hits,
But so as puts me into fits!
He shot my fellow dog this morning,
Which seemed to me sufficient warning!”

“Quite, quite enough!—So that’s a hitter!
Why, my own fate I thought was bitter,
And full excuse for cut and run;
But give me still the missing gun!
Or rather, Sirius! send me this,
No gun at all, to hit or miss,

Since sporting seems to shoot thus double,
That right or left it brings us trouble ! ”

So ended Dash ;—and Pointer Don
Prepared to urge the moral on ;
But here a whistle long and shrill
Came sounding o'er the council hill,
And starting up, as if their tails
Had felt the touch of shoes and nails,
Away they scamper'd down the slope,
As fast as other pairs elope,—
Resolv'd, instead of sporting rackets,
To beg, or dance in fancy jackets ;
At butchers' shops to try their luck ;
To help to draw a cart or truck ;
Or lead Stone Blind poor men, at most
Who would but hit or miss a post.





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